



**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY  
&  
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
M E M O R A N D U M**

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**DATE:** June 25, 2008

**TO:** Ray Giometti, Planning Commission Chair  
Members of the Planning Commission

**FROM:** Angie Mathias, Associate Planner

**SUBJECT:** **CPA #2008-M-04, Red Mill**

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**DESCRIPTION**

This map amendment involves establishing appropriate Comprehensive Plan designations and zoning for the area that is in the proposed Red Mill annexation area. Currently, the area has two Comprehensive Plan designations – Residential Single Family (RSF) and Commercial Corridor (CC). Initial analysis indicates that there is at least a need to designate some areas as Residential Multi-Family (RMF), Commercial Corridor (CC), Residential Single Family (RSF), and Residential Medium Density (RMD).

**ISSUE SUMMARY**

1. Existing land uses in the Red Mill potential annexation area do not match existing Renton Comprehensive Plan designations; some areas need to be re-designated with a Comprehensive Plan designation that more closely matches the existing land use.
2. What is the most appropriate zoning for the area?

**ANALYSIS**

The Red Mill area has greatly varied existing land uses. There are fairly extensive critical areas, intensive commercial land uses, single-family residential, and multi-family residential. Table 1 outlines the existing land uses, the existing King County zoning, existing Renton Comprehensive Plan designation, and existing densities or other notes as applicable. Stars in the far left column indicate parcels that likely will require re-designation.

The area includes a significant amount of commercial development, with multiple grocery stores, strip malls, convenience stores, freestanding auto related retail, some office, and restaurants. These commercial uses are primarily located around the intersection of 140<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southeast and Southeast Petrovitsky Road. There are several multi-family

developments including the Fairwood Landing Apartments, Pebble Cove Apartments, and Red Mill Condominiums. These developments have been developed with a substantial number of units and fairly high estimated density. The table below details the number of units and density for each. These calculations for density are for gross density, not net density. Gross density uses only the total size of the lot and does not deduct any area for the critical areas or roadways. Several of the areas have significant critical areas and the physical buildings have been constructed on a limited portion of the overall land area. The actual resulting development may be at higher density than what is estimated based on the gross area.

<b>Development</b>	<b>Number of Units</b>	<b>Estimated Gross Density</b>
Fairwood Landing Apartments	194 Units	19.2 du/acre
Pebble Cove Apartments	288 Units	17.7 du/acre
Red Mill Condominiums – Phase I	96 Units	19.4 du/acre
Red Mill Condominiums – Phase I	54 Units	8.6 du/acre

The area also has some existing and vested single-family subdivisions. The table below details these subdivisions and their number of lots and estimated density.

<b>Development</b>	<b>Number of Lots</b>	<b>Estimated Gross Density</b>
Emerald Vista	32 lots	Built at approximately Renton R-8 standards
Thorntons Place – <i>Vested</i>	27 lots	5.96 du/acre
Hoscheit Short Plat – <i>Vested</i>	7 lots	2.9 du/acre
Ridge at Molasses Creek – <i>Vested</i>	103 lots	4.4 du/acre

There are approximately eleven parcels that are developed with single-family homes on lots that are larger than ½ acre. Finally, there are several parcels that are vacant. A significant number of them are environmentally constrained with wetlands and/or topography. Most of the parcels with the most significant constraints are owned King County. However, several are privately owned or owned by the Renton Housing Authority.

### **Roadways and Traffic**

Southeast Petrovitsky Road runs at the north of most of the area and through the center of the easternmost portions. Petrovitsky is a collector arterial that carries significant traffic volumes. At the intersection of Petrovitsky Road and 140<sup>th</sup> Ave SE the 2004 traffic counts on Petrovitsky Road both eastbound and westbound were over 25,000 vehicles per day (25,874 eastbound and 25,641 westbound). The traffic counts for the same year at on

140<sup>th</sup> Ave SE were over 21,551 vehicles daily northbound and 19,915 vehicles daily southbound.

### **Existing Comprehensive Plan and Zoning**

There area within the Red Mill area currently has two existing Renton Comprehensive Plan designations, **Single Family Residential** and **Commercial Corridor**. None of the area has been zoned. Much of the existing land use in the Red Mill area matches the existing Comprehensive Plan designations and just needs to have the most appropriate zoning determined. For example, in the triangle area the Safeway, Ace Hardware, etc. all have the Commercial Corridor designation. The zoning has not been determined. However, the Commercial Arterial zone is an appropriate zone for the type of development in the triangle area.

### **Residential Single Family**

In the Single Family Residential designation the associated zoning is Residential Eight dwelling units per acre (R-8). The purpose of the Single Family Residential designation is in part that land *“be used for quality detached residential development organized into neighborhoods at urban densities.”* Further, *“it is intended that larger subdivision, infill development, and rehabilitation of existing housing be carefully designed to enhance and improve the quality of single-family living environments.”*

Specific policies that relate to this Comprehensive Plan amendment are:

Policy LU-147. Net development densities should fall within a range of 4.0 to 8.0 dwelling units per net acre in Residential Single Family neighborhoods.

Policy LU-148. A minimum lot size of 5,000 square feet should be allowed on in-fill parcels of less than one acre (43,560 sq. ft.) in single-family designations. Allow a reduction in lot size to 4,500 square feet on parcels greater than one acre to create an incentive for aggregation of land. The minimum lot size is not intended to set the standard for density in the designation, but to provide flexibility in subdivision/plat design and facilitate development within the allowed density range.

The purpose and intent of the R-8 zone is to fulfill the Comprehensive Plan policies and objectives for the Residential Single Family designation. The uses allowed in the R-8 zone are primarily residential. There are some non-residential uses that may be allowed as a Hearing Examiner conditional use such as: golf courses, religious institutions, and medical institutions. There are some areas within the Red Mill area that it will be appropriate to zone R-8. There are other areas that will need to be considered for Residential Low Density and Residential Multi-Family designations.

### **Commercial Corridor**

In the Commercial Corridor designation there are three possible zoning designations, Commercial Arterial (CA), Commercial Office (CO), and Light Industrial (IL). The Commercial Corridor designation *“is characterized by concentrated, pre-existing commercial activity, primarily in a linear urban form, that provides necessary goods and*

*services for daily living, accessible to near-by neighborhoods, serving a sub-regional market and accommodating large volumes of traffic.” Further, “Commercial Corridor areas are characterized by medium intensity levels of activity. It is anticipated, however, that intensity levels in these areas will increase over time . . . “*

Specific policies that relate to this Comprehensive Plan amendment are:

Objective LU-DDD. The Commercial Corridor land use designation should include:

- 1) Established commercial and office areas;
- 2) Developments located on large parcels of land;
- 3) Projects that may be highly visible from principal arterials;
- 4) Uses dependent upon or benefiting from high-volume traffic;
- 5) uses that provide significant employment; and
- 6) Businesses that provide necessary or desirable goods and services to the larger community.

Policy LU-333. The Commercial Corridor Land Use designation should be mapped in areas with the following characteristics:

- 1) Located on, and having access to, streets classified as principal arterials;
- 2) High traffic volumes; or
- 3) Land use pattern characterized by strip commercial development, shopping centers, or office parks.

In designating an area with the **Commercial Arterial (CA) zone** the Comprehensive Plan states that the area should meet certain criteria, those criteria are:

- 1) The corridor is served by transit or has transit within one-quarter mile;
- 2) A historical strip commercial urban development pattern predominates;
- 3) Large, surface parking lots exist;
- 4) Primary development on the site is located at rear portions of the property with parking in front of the buildings;
- 5) Parcel size and configuration typically is defined by a larger parcel fronting the arterial street with multiple buildings and businesses; and
- 7) The corridor exhibits long block lengths and/or an incomplete grid street network.

The uses allowed in the CA zone are broad in terms of commercial development. Uses like eating and drinking establishments, retail sales, indoor recreation facilities, and vehicle fueling stations are permitted outright. Outside of designated business districts like the NE Fourth Business District allowed uses include: dance clubs, hotels, and small-scale vehicle rentals. Uses that area allowed as conditional uses include: auto body

shops, transit centers, and light manufacturing and fabrication. Almost all of the area in Red Mill that is currently designated Commercial Corridor can be appropriately zoned CA. The Commercial Corridor designation will need to be expanded across 140<sup>th</sup> Avenue Southeast to include the 7-11, Auto Zone, etc. Additionally, the Fairwood Landing Apartments may need to be removed from the Commercial Corridor area and more appropriately designated with Residential Multi-Family.

In designating an area with the **Commercial Office (CO) zone** the Comprehensive Plan states that the area should meet certain criteria, those criteria are:

- 1) Site is located contiguous to an existing or planned transit route;
- 2) Large parcel size;
- 3) High visibility; and
- 4) Opportunities for views.

CO policies dictate that the zone encourage “*medium and high intensity offices . . . as the primary use in Commercial Office zoned areas*”. Further, the zone seeks “*high-rise office development*” that “*should be limited to ten (10) stories and fifteen (15) stories may be obtained through a height bonus system*”. These policies and criteria for designating areas CO make it an inappropriate designation for the existing offices that are in the Red Mill area. The existing offices are on small parcels and are low storied buildings. Both medical/dental offices and general offices are permitted in the CA zone. It will be appropriate to zone the existing offices CA.

### **Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Alternatives**

There are several portions of the Red Mill area that the Residential Single Family or Commercial Corridor designations are not appropriate for. More appropriate designations are Residential Low Density, Residential Multi-Family, and perhaps Residential Medium Density. Within each of these designations there are two and three zoning alternatives.

#### **Residential Low Density**

The Residential Low Density Comprehensive Plan designation is applied to land that is “*not appropriate for urban levels of development*”. When the land does “*not have significant sensitive areas, or can be adequately protected by the critical areas ordinance*” the area should be zoned Residential Four Dwelling Units per acre (R-4). Further, areas to be zoned with R-4 are areas where the “*constraints are not extensive*”. If land has “*significant environmental constraints, including but not limited to: steep slopes, erosion hazard, floodplains, and wetlands or where the area is in a designated Urban Separator*” it should be zoned either Resource Conservation (RC) or Residential One Dwelling Unit per acre (R-1).

Specific relevant policies include:

Policy LU-135. For the purpose of mapping four dwelling units per net acre (4-du/ac) zoned areas as contrasted with lower density Residential 1

(R-1) and Resource Conservation (RC) areas, the prevalence of significant environmental constraints should be interpreted to mean:

- 1) Critical areas encumber a significant percentage of the gross area;
- 2) Developable areas are separated from one another by pervasive critical areas or occur on isolated portions of the site and access limitations exist;
- 3) The location of the sensitive area results in a non-contiguous development pattern;
- 4) The area is a designated urban separator; or
- 5) Application of the Critical Areas Ordinance setbacks/buffers and/or net density definition would create a situation where the allowed density could not be accommodated on the remaining net developable area without modifications or variances to other standards.

Objective LU-EE: Designate Residential 4 du/acre zoning in those portions of the RLD designation appropriate for urban levels of development by providing suitable environments for suburban and/or estate style, single-family residential dwellings.

The properties owned by King County that are at the western boundary of the Red Mill area are likely more appropriately designated with Residential Low Density. That area has significant wetlands extending over much of the area to include a portion of the triangular parcel owned by the Renton Housing Authority. Environmental constraints continue east from the wetlands with topographical changes. The oddly shaped parcel at approximately the center of the Red Mill area has significant topographical constraints. The elevation change at its steepest is over 100 feet, with an estimated slope of greater than 50%. Finally, Molasses Creek, a Class 2 stream, runs roughly in northerly to southerly direction lying just east of the approximate center of the Red Mill area. All of these areas with potential environmental constraints will need to be evaluated to determine the most appropriate Comprehensive Plan designation and zoning.

### **Residential Multi-Family (RMF) Comprehensive Plan Designation and Zone**

The RMF designation and zone has some specific criteria that are to be met in order for the designation to be applied. Within the existing City limits properties must meet the following criteria:

- 1) Properties under consideration should take access from a principal arterial, minor arterial, or collector. Direct access should not be through a less intense land use designation area;
- 2) Properties under consideration must abut an existing Residential Multi-family land use designation on at least two (2) sides and be on the same side of the principal arterial, minor arterial, or collector serving it; and

- 3) Any such expansion of the Residential Multi-family land use designation should not bisect or truncate another contiguous land use district.

Criteria number two cannot be met in the Red Mill area. However, within areas that are annexed into the City there are different criteria that can be used, they are:

- 1) There is a pre-existing and long term use of multi-family development;  
and
- 2) The property is 43,560 square feet or less in size, and
- 3) The designation shall not be used as justification for expanding Residential Multi-Family zone to other properties.

Development density in the Residential Multi-family designation should be within a range of ten (10) dwelling units per acre as a minimum to twenty (20) dwelling units per acre as a maximum. Much of the existing multi-family development in the Red Mill area is within these density limitations and meets the criteria for annexation areas. For example, the Pebble Cove Apartments are on 16.3 acres, the project is built out, and the estimated density is 17.7 du/acre.

### **Residential Medium Density Comprehensive Plan Designation**

Areas designated Residential Medium Density (RMD) should be “*where access, topography and adjacent land uses create conditions appropriate for a variety of unit types designed to incorporate features from both single-family and multi-family developments, and to support cost-efficient housing, infill development, transit service, and the efficient use of urban services and infrastructure*”. There are two zones that may be applied with the RMD Comprehensive Plan designations, they are Residential 10 dwelling units per net acre (R-10), Residential 14 dwelling units per net acre (R-14), or new zoning designations that allow housing in this density range.

Areas that meet three of the following criteria may be mapped with Residential 10 (R-10) zoning:

- 1) The area already has a mix of small-scale multi-family units or has had long standing zoning for flats or other low-density multi-family use;
- 2) Development patterns conducive to medium-density development are established;
- 3) Vacant lots exist or parcels have redevelopment potential for medium-density infill development;
- 4) The project site is adjacent to major arterial(s) and public transit service is located within ¼ mile;
- 5) The site can be buffered from existing single-family residential neighborhoods having densities of eight (8) dwelling units or less; or
- 6) The site can be buffered from adjacent or abutting incompatible uses.

**Policy LU-159.** Areas may be considered for Residential 14 (R-14) zoning where the site meets the following criteria:

- 1) Adjacent to major arterial(s);
- 2) Adjacent to the Urban Center, Highlands Center Village, or Commercial Corridor designations;
- 3) Part of a designation totaling over 20 acres (acreage may be in separate ownership);
- 4) Site is buffered from single-family areas or other existing, potentially incompatible uses; and
- 5) Development within the density range and of similar unit type is achievable given environmental constraints.

The Red Mill Condominiums phase II are not traditional condominiums. Each home is self-contained and platted. The homes are more appropriately called small lot single family, with lots that are approximately 3,600 square feet. This area may be most appropriately designated as Residential Medium Density.

### **CAPACITY ANALYSIS**

The first two lines in the table below indicates the capacity of privately owned vacant and re-developable land combined with Renton Housing Authority vacant and re-developable land at both R-4 and R-8 zones. The triangular shaped parcel of the Renton Housing Authority has wetlands on approximately half the parcel, so the calculation assumes roughly half the parcel size. The third line applies to the oddly shaped parcel that is vacant with significant environmental constraints, including wetlands and topography. It was estimated that approximately 1/3 of the parcel would be developable. These calculations are based on Buildable Lands methodology.

	<b>R-4</b>	<b>R-8</b>	<b>R-14</b>
Vacant	31	48	
Re-developable	54	63	
Vacant w/ constraints			56
Total	85	111	56

### **CONCLUSION**

There are several issues that need to be discussed and/or resolved in regards to this Comprehensive Plan Amendment and zoning. Further analysis is needed in order to determine the appropriate recommendations.